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## Loudoun County Board of Supervisors Fire and Rescue Commission Charter

### Policy and Philosophy

The Board is committed to providing Loudoun citizens with competent, effective and efficient fire, rescue and emergency medical services. Responsibility for the provision of these public safety services in Loudoun County rests with the Department of Fire and Rescue Services and the volunteer system.

The Board believes that fire, rescue, and emergency services should reflect: cost-effective service provision; recognition and promotion of general public welfare; accountability for service levels and resource use in a manner required of all public programs; fair representation and communication of all views regarding these services; and adequate response to projected growth within the County. These objectives will be achieved through a combined volunteer and career system, as endorsed and supported by the Board, defined by these essential characteristics:

- ◆ Mutual and cooperative delivery of fire, rescue and emergency medical services through a combined system of volunteer companies and career staff employed by the County.
- ◆ Recommendations to the Board from the Fire and Rescue Commission and the Chief of Fire and Rescue Services regarding fire, rescue and emergency medical service levels, system policy, standards and agreements.
- ◆ Development and revision of fire, rescue and emergency medical operational procedures. The Chief of Fire and Rescue Services is responsible for all system-wide operations and, with the Commission, shall establish procedures and guidelines to implement Board policies.
- ◆ The Board of Supervisors maintains ultimate approval authority over all policies and procedures. If the Chief disagrees with a decision of the Commission, the Chief may bring the issue to the Board of Supervisors for resolution.

Service delivery must be provided on a Countywide basis and must be characterized by uniformity in emergency response performance and in the application of operational regulations and procedures. The Board recognizes and respects the contributions of volunteers, which have resulted in the protection of life and property in Loudoun County and vital and generous private support for essential public services.

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The County will support the continuation and expansion of volunteer participation as a means of providing fire, rescue and emergency medical services in a cost-effective manner while encouraging qualified volunteer participation.

## Goals

The purpose of this charter is to promote the achievement of the following goals with respect to the provision of fire, rescue and emergency medical services within Loudoun County.

- ♦ Protection of Life and Property - Provide cost-effective, equitable, and responsive services to all citizens of Loudoun County, including adequate response times, effective fire and rescue incident supervision, adequate staffing, effective distribution of personnel and apparatus and timely adaptation to changing service needs. All organizations and participants comprising the fire, rescue and emergency medical system shall share responsibility for continuously improving their effectiveness and efficiency.
- ♦ Volunteer Participation and Practices - Involve volunteers in decisions related to operations, procedures and guidelines through representation on the Fire and Emergency Medical Services Councils and the Commission. Promote continual improvement in the capabilities and job performance of volunteer members. Promote the highest caliber conduct of volunteer members.
- ♦ Accountability - Maintain accountability to the Board and Loudoun County citizens for effective service delivery, sound management practices and the responsible use of public funds.
- ♦ Operations and Administration - Maintain effective service delivery levels while minimizing associated costs of administrative overhead and operational expenses, including apparatus, facilities and equipment. Effectively manage volunteers, purchasing, maintenance, training and other programs.

## Composition of the Fire and Rescue Commission.

1. Members of the Commission shall be appointed by the Board of Supervisors to serve two-year staggered terms.
2. The Commission shall consist of five (5) voting members and two (2) non-voting members, all of who are entitled to participate in all Commission meetings.
3. The five (5) voting members shall include: the Chief of the Department of Fire and Rescue Services, two (2) fire volunteers and two (2) emergency medical services volunteers. The two (2) non-voting members shall include a member of the Board of Supervisors and the Operational Medical Director.

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4. The Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and other officers shall be elected annually by the Commission from among the volunteer voting members, but in no event shall the Chief serve as the Chairperson.

### **By-laws**

The Commission shall develop and adopt by-laws detailing the Commission's operating rules and regulations, which may be revised as necessary from time to time by a majority vote of Commission members.

### **Independent Fire and Rescue Companies**

The independent volunteer companies recognized by the Board of Supervisors are authorized to provide fire, rescue and emergency medical services as provided in this charter, other agreements between the County and the Companies, applicable law and Countywide policies and regulations. Specifically, the public safety functions of the companies shall include: fire suppression and related activities; fire prevention activities; and rescue and emergency medical services.

Each company shall provide annually to the Commission a current listing of all operational and administrative officers and its board of directors. The Commission shall be advised in writing of changes to a given Company's operational and administrative officer positions within thirty (30) days of such change.

All independent Companies shall follow the policies, procedures and guidelines established by the Board, the Commission and the Chief. Failure to follow system policies, procedures and guidelines may result in action by the Board of Supervisors.

### **Station Creation or Dissolution**

The creation and dissolution of fire and rescue stations is subject to approval by the Board of Supervisors upon recommendation by the Commission.

### **Resource and Financial Management**

The Board, through the County Administrator, is responsible for County resources, the allocation of County revenue and the adoption of policies regarding County financial, procurement and property management matters. As with all agencies receiving public funds, the County Administrator may authorize Commission and Company use of County systems and practices in these matters.

At the request of the County Administrator, the Commission and Companies shall make available budgets and accounting information that details and documents the expenditure of County funds. The Board shall appropriate (depending on funding availability) funds for fire, rescue and emergency medical services each fiscal year. All appropriations are conditional upon the Commission and Companies being subject to and complying with all provisions established and adopted by the Board and the Commission.